

VZCZCXRO3709  
RR RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLZ RUEHROV  
DE RUEHVI #2960 3511516  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 171516Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9176  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES

UNCLAS VIENNA 002960

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [AU](#)  
SUBJECT: AUSTRAIN EDUCATION MINISTER RECOMMENDS BILINGUAL  
INSTRUCTION AS INTEGRATION MEASURE

¶1. Following a December 13 summit of more than 100 education officials and experts to discuss planned reforms of the Austrian school system, Education Minister Claudia Schmied (Social Democrat Party) proposed that the integration of immigrant children could be enhanced by teaching certain subjects in the students' mother tongue. Language competence of students in their mother tongue was crucial for the acquisition of their second language, argued Schmied. In international comparative studies of educational achievement, second-generation immigrant children born in Austria had performed worse than immigrant children born abroad.

¶2. As a next step, Schmied announced a campaign to recruit more bilingual German/Turkish and German/Serbo-croatian teachers. Schmied will also establish a department for integration issues in the Education Ministry, merging the existing divisions for language promotion, intercultural issues, and integration.

¶3. While the Vienna City Councillor for Integration Issues Sandra Frauenberger (Social Democrat) welcomed Schmied's plans, which "illustrated Austria's commitment as immigration country," representatives from the right-wing/populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) stressed that integration could primarily be achieved by learning German. Ongoing mother-tongue instruction for students in Vienna schools had already proven to be unsuccessful, argued the FPÖ, underscoring that students must learn German before entering school.  
KILNER